Kurdish Terms in al-Idrīsī's *Kitāb al-ǧāmiʿ li-ṣifāt ʾashtāt al-nabāt wa-ḍurūb ʾanwāʿ al-mufradāt*

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Introduction

The *Kitāb al-ǧāmiʿ li-ṣifāt ʾashtāt al-nabāt wa-ḍurūb ʾanwāʿ al-mufradāt* ("Compendium of the properties of diverse plants and various kinds of simple drugs") is a botanical and pharmacological treatise composed in Arabic by Muḥammad al-Idrīsī (d. 1165 CE) at the Norman court in Sicily. The work lists the names of plants and simple drugs alphabetically and provides translations into a number of languages, including Arabic, Berber, Frankish, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Latin, Syriac, and Turkish. Among the Iranian languages, terms are given in Persian (Fārsī) and often in Kurdish (Kurdī), making *Kitāb al-ǧāmiʿ* one of the earliest surviving textual records of the Kurdish language. The treatise survives in two manuscript recensions. One is preserved in Fātiḥ Library in Istanbul (MS 3610), which is incomplete. The second is housed in Mağlis-i Sanā in Tehran (MS 18420), which is complete but omits many of the translated terms found in the Istanbul manuscript.[1] For this reason, my study focuses on the Istanbul manuscript.

MS Fātiḥ 3610

The German Orientalist Helmut Ritter discovered MS Fātiḥ 3610 in the Fātiḥ library in 1928 and brought it to the attention of Max Meyerhof, who subsequently studied it in detail.[2] The manuscript measures 35 × 25 cm and consists of 148 folios (296 pages), with 26 lines per page. The text is written in a clear *naskh* script, though it often lacks diacritical marks and occasionally omits consonants. The manuscript is undated; Meyerhof argued that it was copied directly from Idrīsī's original, while Ritter suggested that the copy was produced in the early 13th century. Ownership notes mention an individual named Ibn al-Muʾammil, dated 804 AH/1401 CE, whom Meyerhof identified as likely a descendant of a well-known

[1] Russell Hopley, "The Translation of Nature: Al-Sharīf al-Idrīsī on the Plant Life of the Western Mediterranean", in *Translating the Middle Ages*, ed. Karen L. Fresco and Charles D. Wright (London: Ashgate, 2012), 25; Cristina La Rosa, "La terminologia botanica sicula e andalusa nel Kitāb al-ǧāmiʿ li ṣifāt aštāt al-nabāt wa-ḍurūb anwāʿ al-mufradāt di Idrīsī", *Annali di Ca' Foscari* 50, 2014, 97.

[2] Max Meyerhof, "Über die Pharmacologie und Botanik des arabischen Geographen Edrisi", *Archiv für Geschichte der Mathematik, der Naturwissenschaften und der Technik*, 12, 1929a, 45–53; Max Meyerhof, "Eine Arzneimittellehre des arabischen Geographen Edrisi", *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, 5, 1929b, 388–390; Max Meyerhof, "Die allgemeine Botanik und Pharmacologie des Edrisi", *Archiv für Geschichte der Matematik, Naturwissenschaften und Technik*, 12, 1930, 225–236; Max Meyerhof, "Études de pharmacologie arabe tirées des manuscrits inédits. III. Deux manuscrits illustrés du Livre des simples d'Ahmad al-Gafiqi. IV. Le recueil de descriptions de drogues simples du chérif al-Idrisi", *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Égypte* 23, 1941, 89–101.

Arab-Andalusian family established in Seville and Granada. The manuscript also bears the *waqf* seal of Ottoman Sultan Maḥmūd I, who reigned from 1730 to 1754.[3]

Only two of the original four volumes have survived in this manuscript, containing a total of 610 entries,[4] of which 34 include Kurdish translations. The Kurdish forms are generally transmitted accurately, although, as elsewhere in the manuscript, their orthography is often defective due to the absence of diacritics. As in other parts of the work, linguistic attributions are occasionally imprecise. Terms labeled as Coptic are often Greek; Nabataean may denote Syriac or Greek; Hindi may correspond either to Sanskrit or to a Dravidian language of southern India.[5] With regard to Kurdish, there is a single case of misattribution on fol. 144r, no. 24, where the Turkic word *kachī* (کچی, "goat") is given as the Kurdish word for goat and has therefore been excluded from the word list presented here.

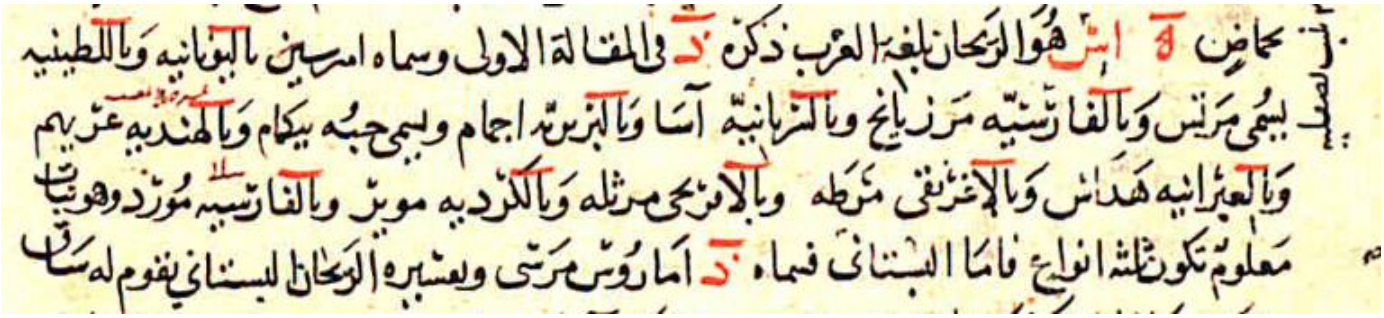
It's unclear whether the Kurdish words were introduced by Idrīsī himself or added by copyists.[6] Idrīsī's familiarity with Kurdish people and their region is well attested in his work,[7] and Kurdish plant names appear in botanical literature as early as the 11th century CE.[8] One of the scholars who made use of his work was the Andalusian botanist Ibn al-Bayṭār (d.1248 CE) who cites Idrīsī's botanical treatise several times in his *Kitāb al-ǧāmiʿ li-mufradāt al-ʾadwiyya wa al-ʾaghdhiya*.[9] Ibn al-Bayṭār was familiar with plant names used by Kurds, whether through Idrīsī's work or other sources. In his description of *bukhūr al-Akrād* ("incense of the Kurds"), he writes: "It is said to be *al-ḥammāmā* (a type of plant); it is also said to be the plant known in Greek as *Andrasyon* and in the Romance language of al-Andalus as *yarbūṭra*—and this is the more accurate opinion, because the Kurds in the eastern lands often use it as incense, especially in Diyār Bakr, where it is known as *sibāh būh*."[10] Kurdish was not a literary language in the medieval period; the appearance of Kurdish terms in medieval literature after the 10th century reflects the influence of Kurdish political and military elites.

[3] Max Meyerhof 1941, 91.
[4] Meyerhof 1941, 92; La Rosa, 99.
[5] cf. La Rosa, 101.
[6] Meyerhof 1941, 92.
[7] Muḥammad Sharīf al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ʾikhtirāq al-ʾāfāq*, vols. 1–2 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Miṣriyya, 2002), 353, 400, 418–19, 659, 681–82.
[8] Al-Bīrūnī, *Kitāb al-ṣaydanah fī al-ṭibb*, translated by Bāqer Mozaffarzādeh (Tehrān: Farhangistān-i Zabān va Adab-i Fārsī 1383 SH / 2004 CE), 951, n. 1026.
[9] La Rosa, 99.
[10] Ibn al-Bayṭār, *al-Ǧāmiʿ li-mufradāt al-ʾadwiyya wa al-ʾaghdhiya*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1992), 116–17.

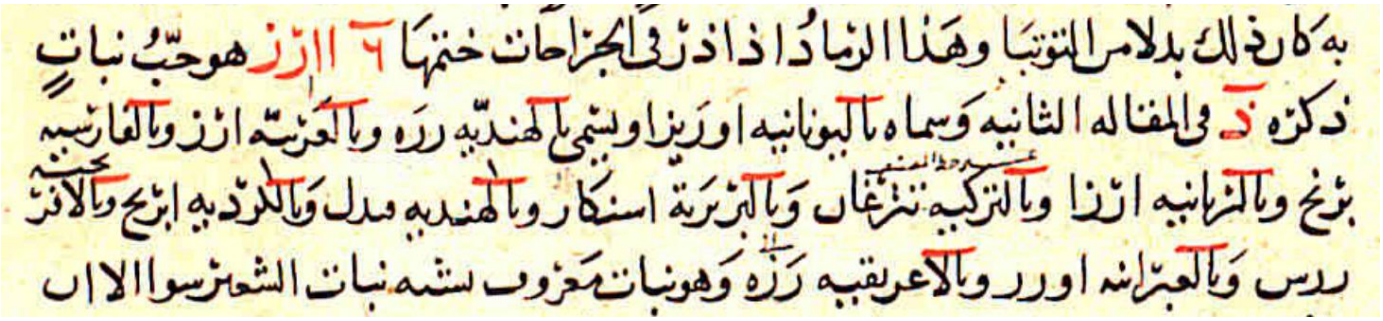
Kurdish words

Kitāb al-ğāmiʿ, vol. I:

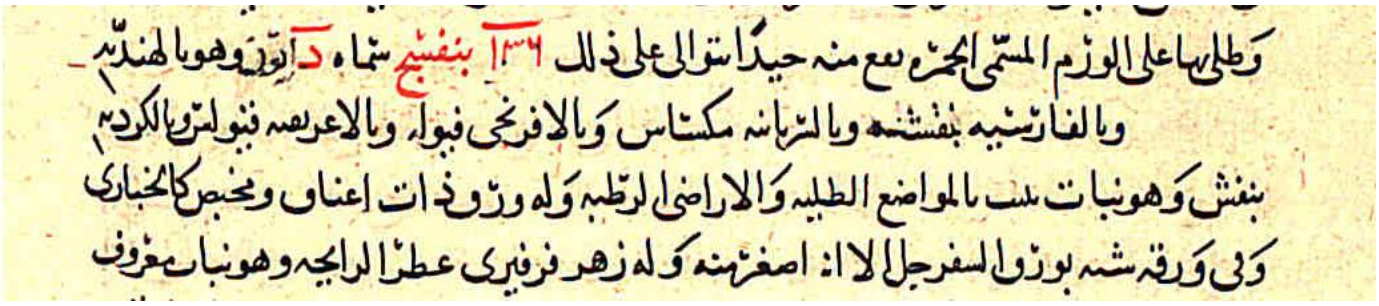
1. Fol. 6v. no. 5—"myrtle": Ar. *ʾās* اس, Kurd. *mūyar* or *muwēr* موير, Pers. *mūrd* مورد (cf. modern Kurdish *mōrd*).



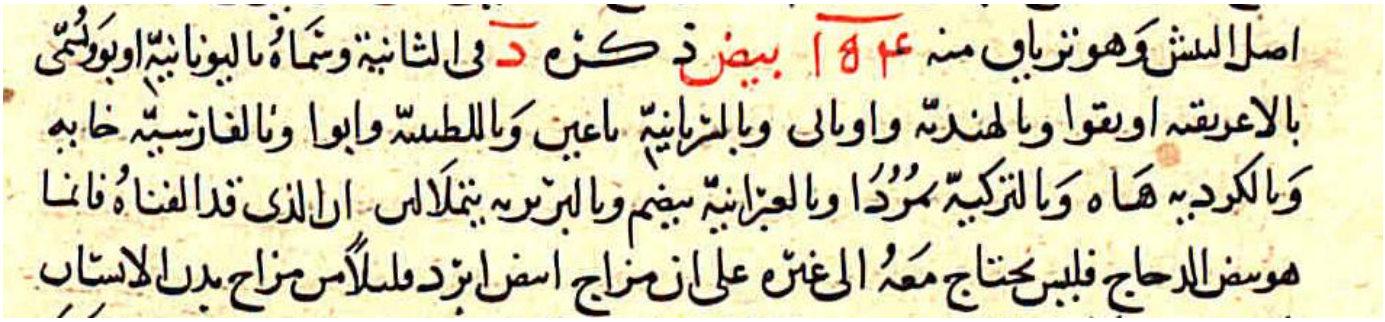
2. Fol. 6r, no. 6—"rice": Ar. *ʾarz* ارز, Pers. *bereng* برنج, Kurd. *ʾibring* ابرج (modern Kurdish *bring*)



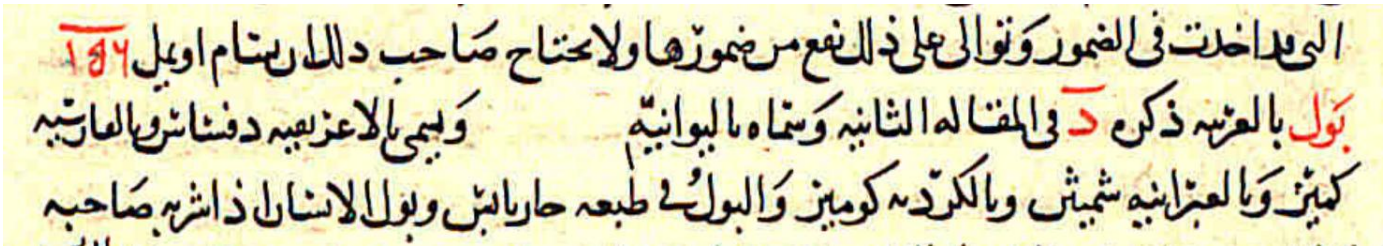
3. Fol. 33v, no. 136—"violet": Ar. *banafsağ* بنفسج, Pers. *banafsha* بنفشه, Kurd. *binafsh* بنفش (Cf. modern Kurdish variants *binafsh*, *binavsh, wanawsha*, *binawasha*).



4. Fol. 36v, no. 184—"egg": Ar. *bayḍ* بيض, Pers. *khāyah* خايه, Kurd. *hāh* هاه (cf. modern Kurdish variants *hēlik*, *hēk*, *hē*, *hāk*).

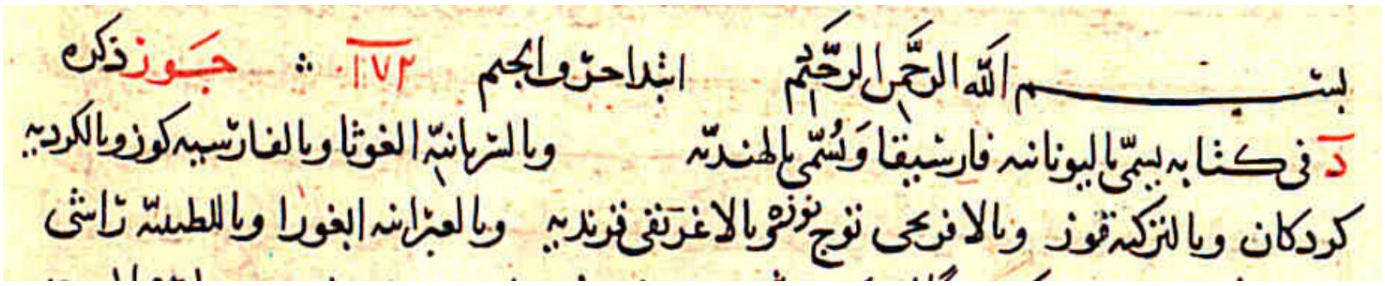


5. Fol. 37v, no. 156—"urine": Ar. *būl* بول, Pers. *gimīz* كميز, Kurd. *gūmīz* كوميز (cf. modern Kurdish *mīz*)

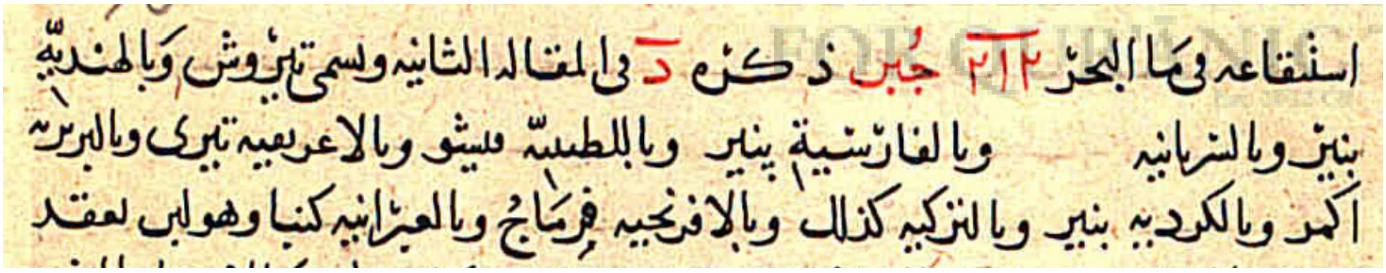


6. Fol. 39v, no. 167—"stork": Ar. *laqlaq* لقلق, Pers. *akrak* اكرك, Kurd. *halāla* هلاله.

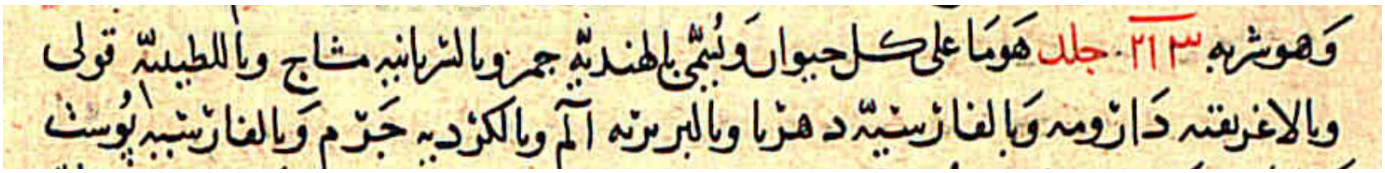
7. Fol. 40r, no. 172—"walnut": Ar. *ǧawz* جوز, Pers. *gōz* كوز, Kurd. *girdakān* كردكان.



8. Fol. 48r, no. 212—"cheese": Ar. *ǧubn* جبن, Pers. *panīr* پنير, Kurd. *panīr* بنير.

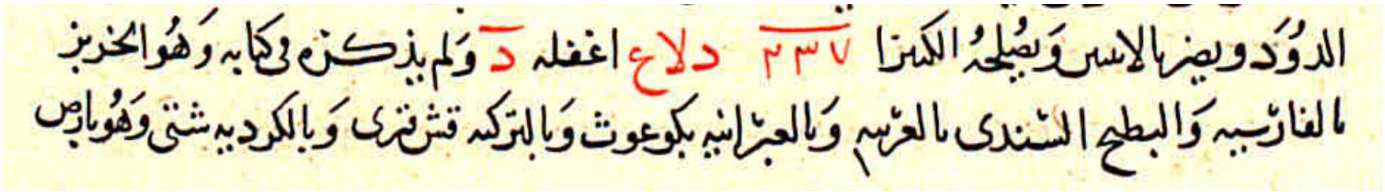


9. Fol. 49v, no. 213—“skin”: Ar. *ǧild* جلد, Kurd. *charm* جرم, Pers. *pūst* پوست.

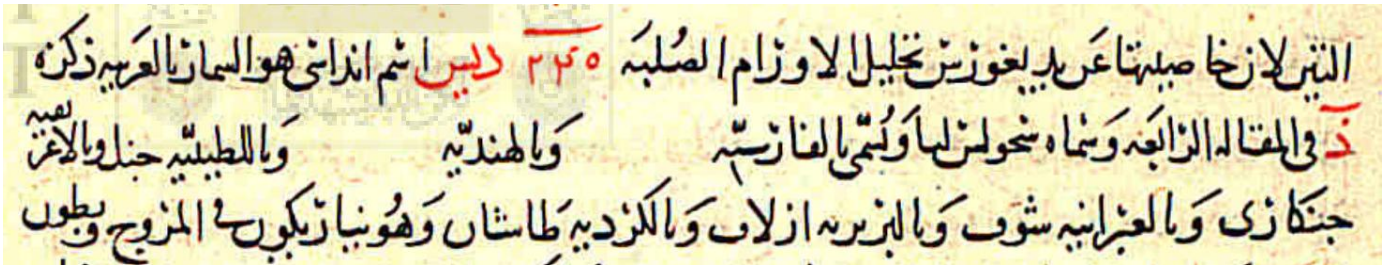


10. Fol. 51v, no. 218— “elm”: Ar. & Pers. *dardār* دردار, Kurd. *bināvī* بنافی.

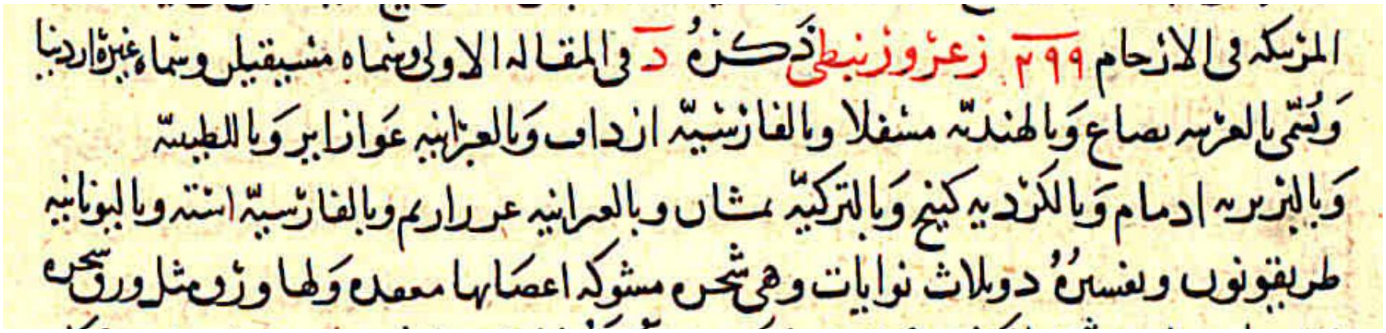
11. Fol. 54v, no. 237—“watermelon”: Ar. *dillāʿ* دلاع, Pers. *kharbaza* خربز, Kurd. *shitī* شتی (cf. modern Kurdish variants *shitī, shūtī* , *shiftī*).



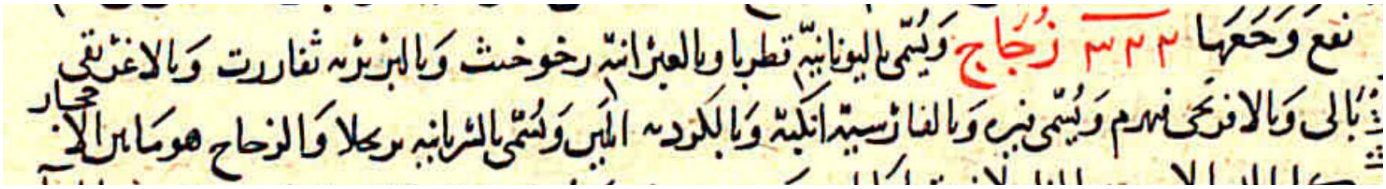
12. Fol. 55v, no. 240—“Juncus acutus”: Ar. *al-sammār* السمار, Kurd. *tāshān* طاشان.



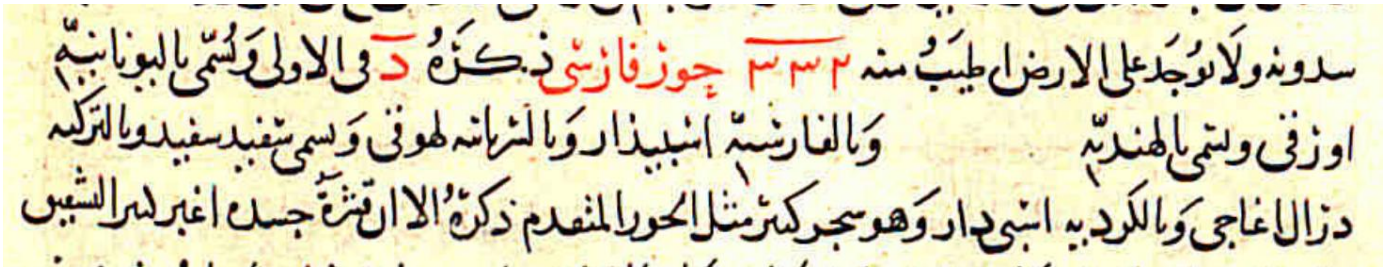
13. Fol. 72v, no. 299—“Crataegus azarolus”: Ar. *zaʿrūr* زعرور, Pers. *ʾazdāf* ازداف, Kurd. *goyīzh* كيج .



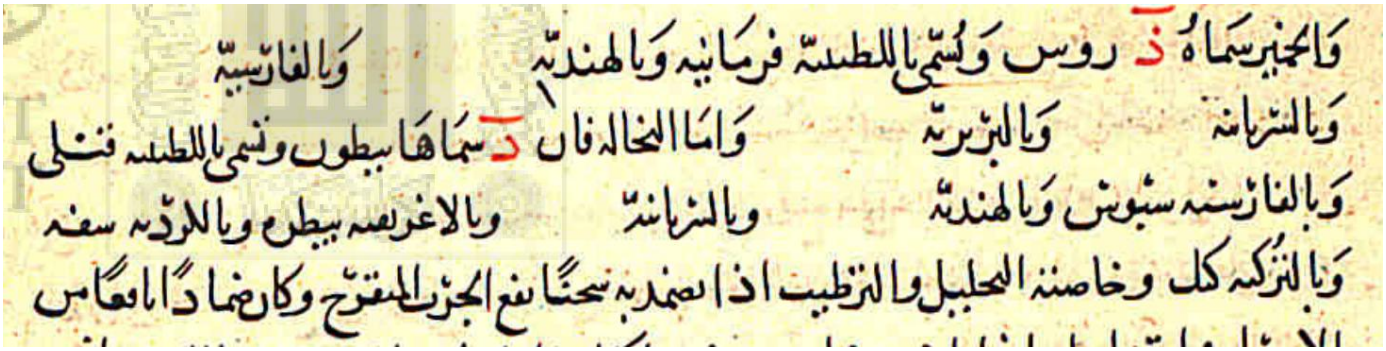
14. Fol. 77v, no. 322—“glass”: Ar. *zuğāğ* زجاج, Pers. *ʾābgīna* ابگینه, Kurd. *ʾāvlīn* اڤلین or *ʾāylīn* ایلین (cf. modern Kurdish *ʾāwēna* ‘mirror’).



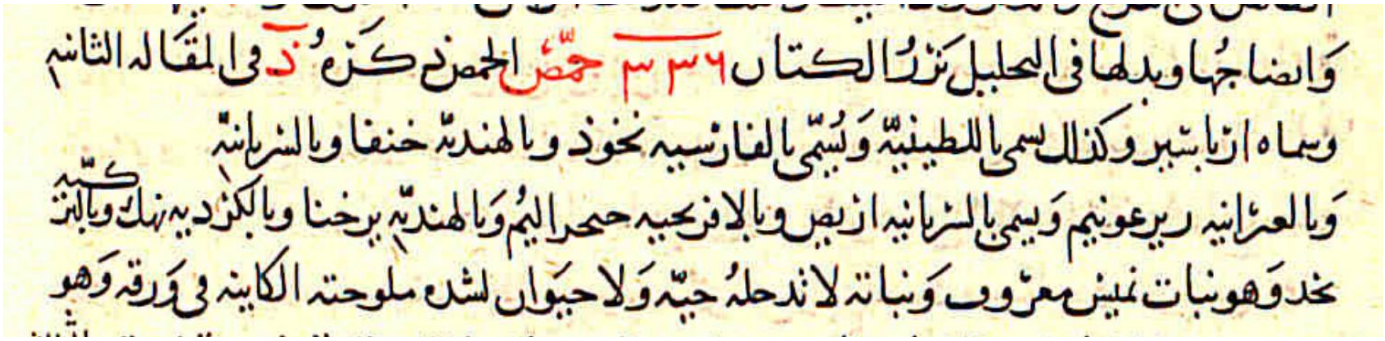
15. Fol. 79r, no. 332—“white poplar, Populus alba”: Ar. *ḥawr fārsī* حور فارسی, Pers. *ʾispīdār* اسپیدار, Kurd. *ʾispīdār* اسپی دار (cf. modern Kurdish *spīdār*, *spīndār*, *ʾispīndār*).



16. Fol. 81v, no. 334—“bran”: Ar. *nakhāla* النخالة, Pers. *sibūs* سبوس, Kurd. *siva* سفه (cf. modern Kurdish *sivī*).

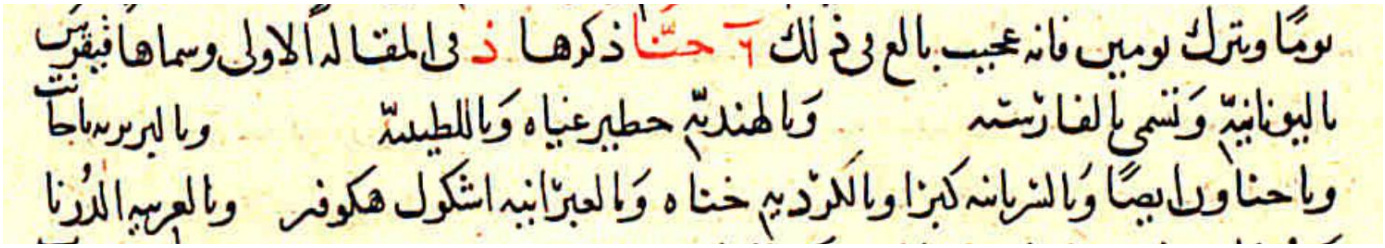


17. Fol. 81r, no. 336—“chickpea”: Ar. *ḥummuṣ* حمص, Pers. *nakhūd* نخود, Kurd. *nahk* نهك (cf. modern Kurdish *nahk*, *nōk*).

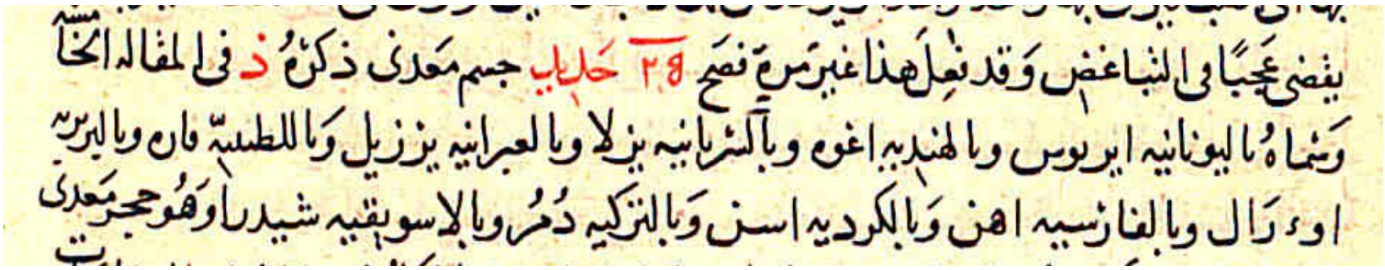


Kitāb al-ğāmiʿ, vol. II:

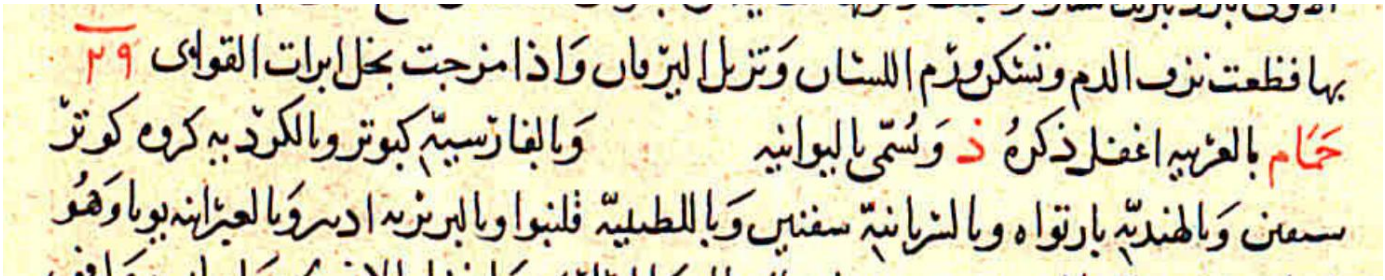
18. Fol. 90v, no. 6—“Lawsonia inermis”: Ar. *ḥinnā* حنا, Kurd. *khannāh* خناه.



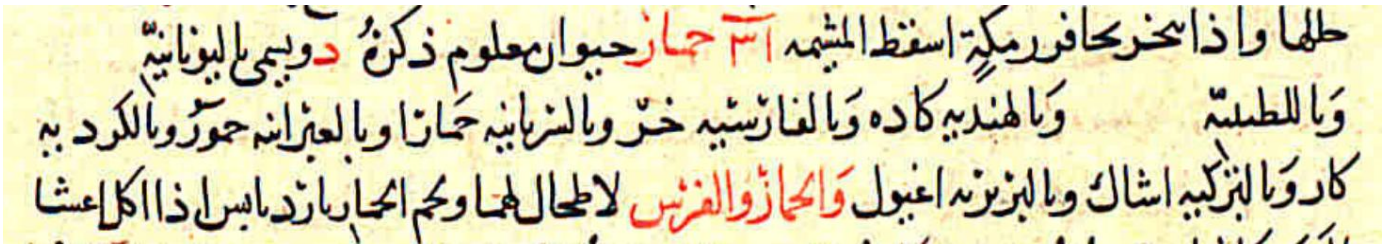
19. Fol. 92r, no. 25—“iron”: Ar. *ḥadīd* حديد, Pers. *ʾāhin*, Kurd. *ʾāsin* اسن.



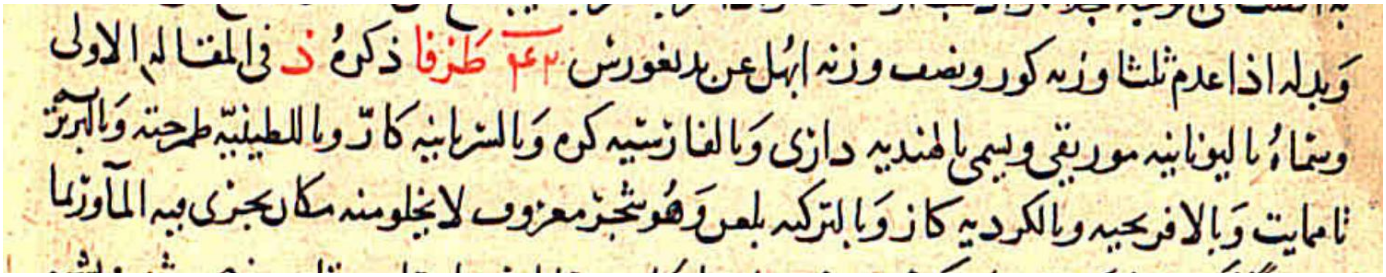
20. Fol. 93r, no. 29—“dove, pigeon”: *ḥamām* حمام, Pers. *kabūtar* كبوتر, Kurd. *krwa* كروه & *kōtir* كوتر.



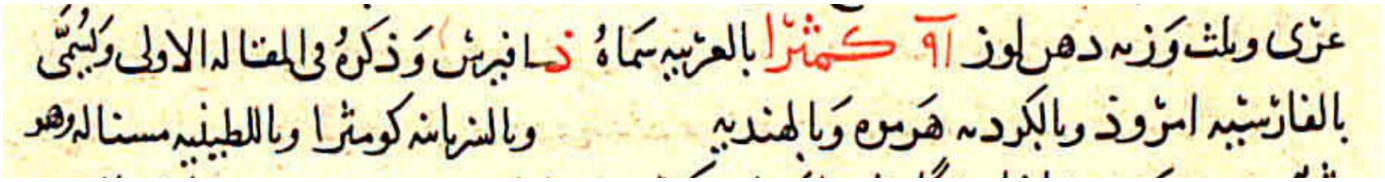
21. Fol. 94v, no. 31—“donkey”: Ar. *ḥimār* حمار, Pers. *khar* خر, Kurd. *kar* كار.



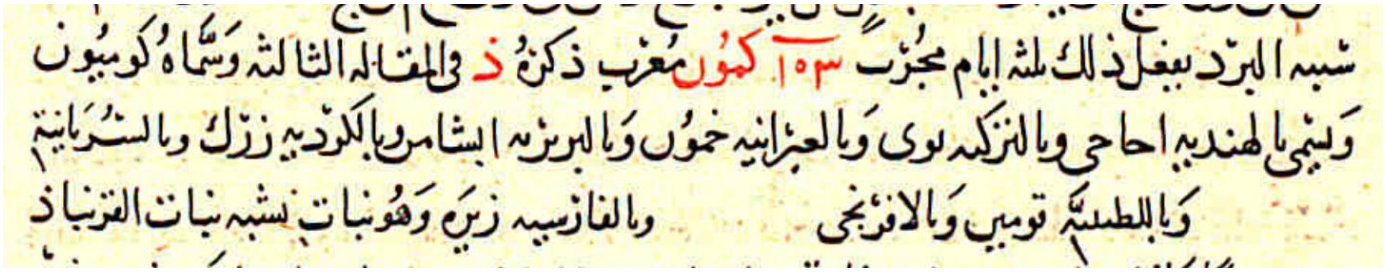
22. Fol. 97r, no. 42—“tamarix”: Ar. *ṭarfā* طرفا, Pers. *gaz* كز, Kurd. *gāz* كاز



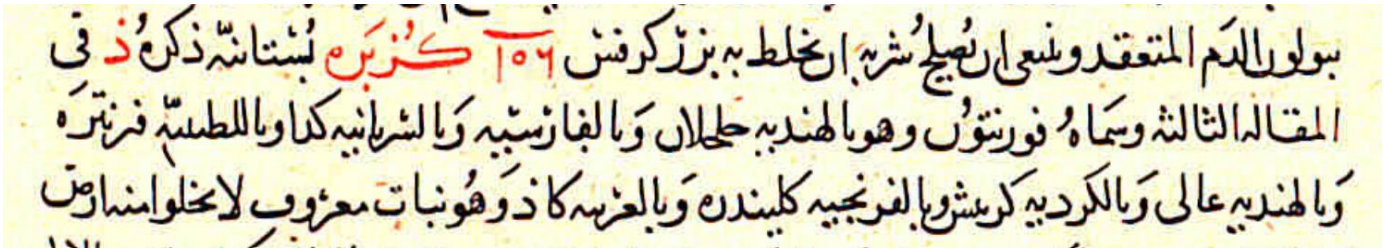
23. Fol. 108v, no. 91—“pear”: Ar. *kummathrā* كمثرا, Pers. *amrūd* امرود, Kurd. *harmē* هرمی.



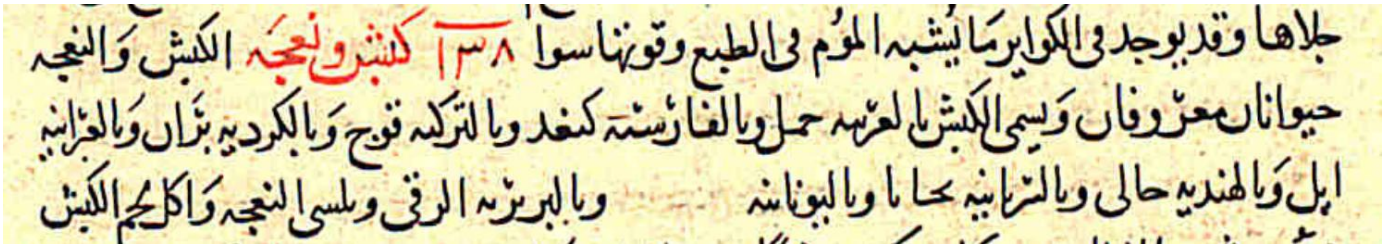
24. Fol. 111v, no. 153—“cumin”: Ar. *kammūn* كمون, Pers. *zīra* زیره, Kurd. *zirk* زرك (cf. modern Kurdish *zīra*).



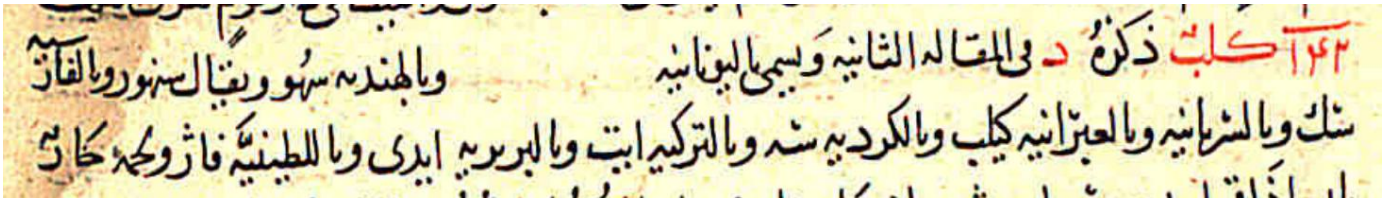
25. Fol. 111r, no. 156—“coriander”: Ar. *kūzbara* كزبره, Kurd. *gizhnīsh* كژنیش (cf. Persian *geshnīz,* modern Kurdish *gizhnīzh*).



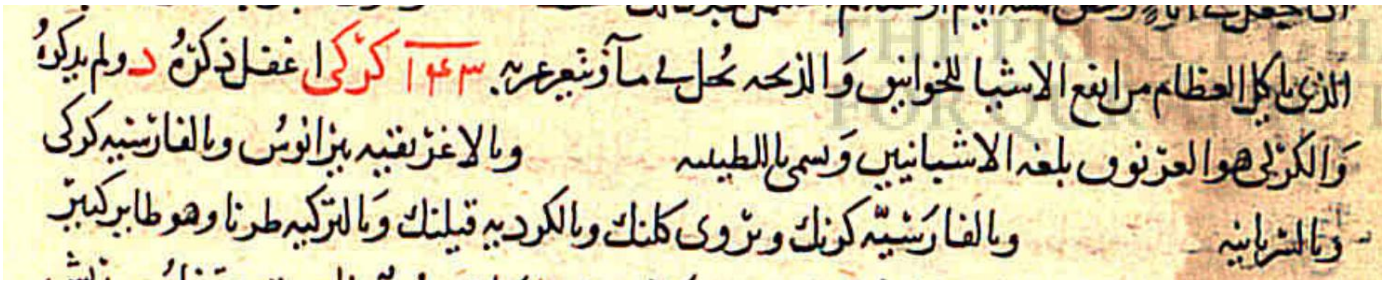
26. Fol. 119v, no. 138—“ram”: Ar. *kabsh* كبش, Pers. *gōsfand* كسفند, Kurd. *barān* بران.



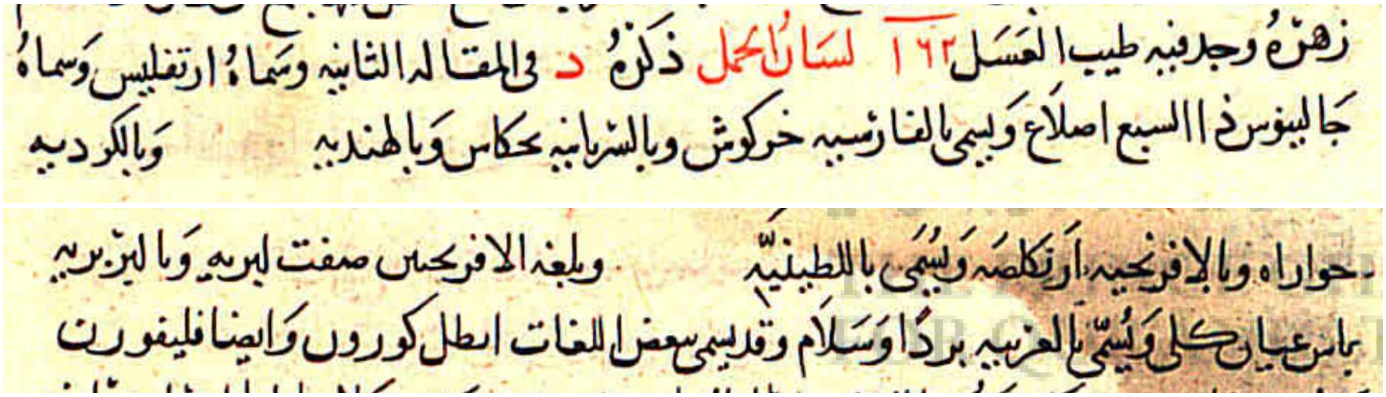
27. Fol. 120v, no. 142—“ dog”: Ar. *kalb* كلب, Pers. *sag* سك, Kurd. *sa* سه.



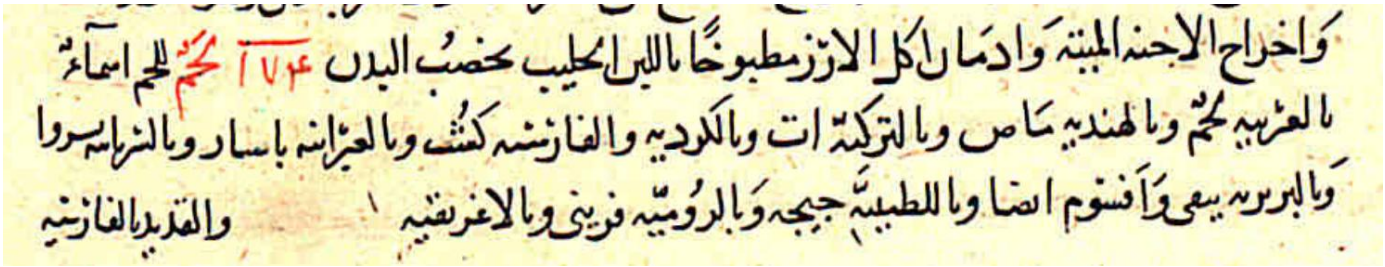
28. Fol. 120r, no. 143—“crane”: Ar. *kurkī* كركي, Pers. *kolang* كلنك, Kurd. *qīling* قيلنك (cf. modern Kurdish *qūlīng*)



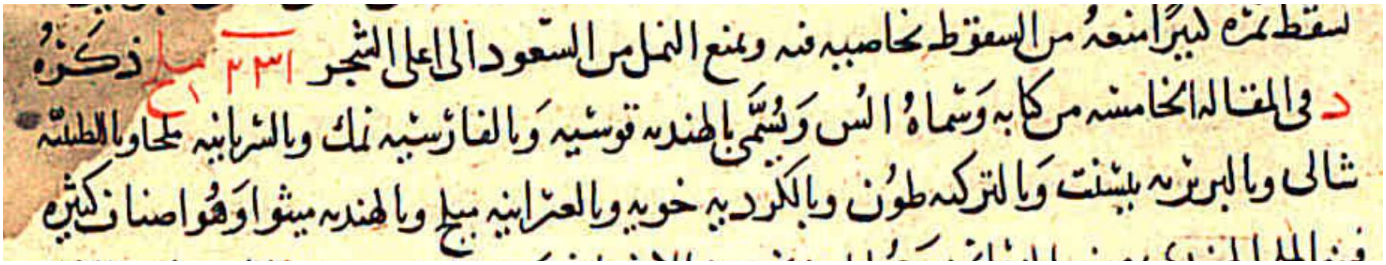
29. Fol. 126r–26v, no. 162—“ plantago”: Ar. *lisān al-ḥamal* لسان الحمل, Pers. *khargōsh* خركوش, Kurd. *khwārāh* حواراه.



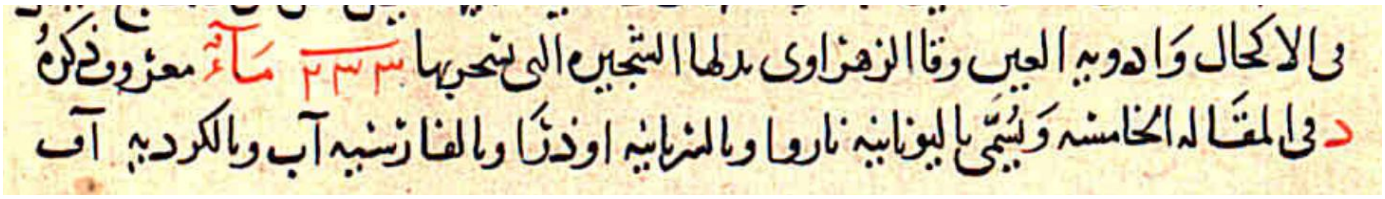
30. Fol. 129v, no. 174—“meat”: Ar. *laḥm* لحم, Kurd. & Pers. *gōsht* كشت.



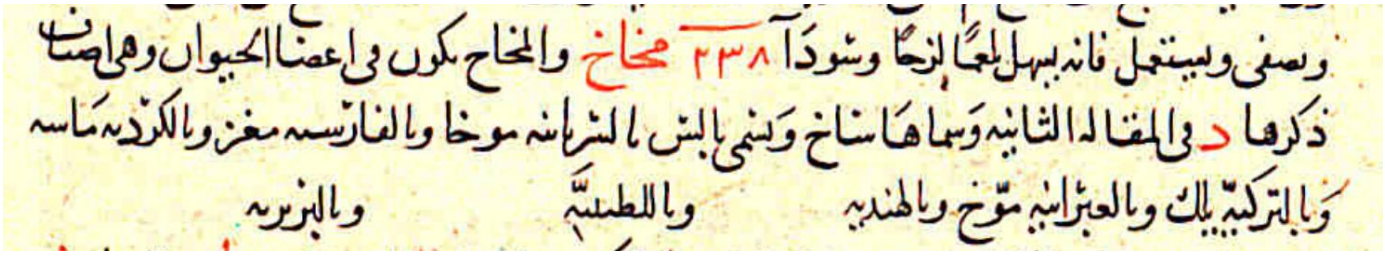
31. fl. 141v, no. 231—“salt”: Ar. *mlḥ* ملح, Pers. *namak* نمك, Kurd. *khwē* خويه.



32. Fol. 141r, no. 233—“ water”: Ar. *māʾ* ماء, Pers. *ʾāb* اب, Kurd. *ʾāv* اف.



33. Fol. 143r, no. 233—“brain, bone marrow”: Ar. *mukh* مخ, Pers. *maghz* مغز, Kurd. *māsha* ماسه (cf. modern Kurdish *mēshk* ‘brain’).



34. fl. 147a, no. 247—“mint”: Ar. *naʿnaʿ* نعنع, Pers. *hūvārsyūn* هوارسيون, Kurd. *pung* بنك.

Table. Kurdish words in *Kitāb al-ğāmiʿ*, vols. 1–2.

No.	Kurdish word	English translation	Folio
1	ʾāsin (اسن)	iron	Fol. 92r, no. 25
2	ʾāv (اف)	water	Fol. 141r, no. 233

No.	Kurdish word	English translation	Folio
3	ʾāvlīn or ʾāylīn (اولین/اولین)	glass	Fol. 77v, no. 322
4	ʾibringˇ (ابرنج)	rice	Fol. 6r, no. 6
5	ʾispīdār (اسپی‌دار)	white poplar	Fol. 79r, no. 332
6	barān (بران)	ram	Fol. 119v, no. 138
7	binafsh (بنفش)	violet	Fol. 33v, no. 136
8	bināvī (ناوی)	elm	Fol. 51v, no. 218
9	charm (جرم)	skin	Fol. 49v, no. 213
10	gāz (گاز)	tamarix	Fol. 97r, no. 42
11	girdakān (گردکان)	walnut	Fol. 40r, no. 172
12	gizhnīsh (گژنیش)	coriander	Fol. 111r, no. 156
13	gōsht (گشت)	meat	Fol. 129v, no. 174
14	goyīzh (گیج)	Crataegus azarolus	Fol. 72v, no. 299
15	gūmīz (گومیز)	urine	Fol. 37v, no. 156
16	hāh (هاه)	egg	Fol. 36v, no. 184
17	halāla (هلاله)	stork	Fol. 39v, no. 167
18	harmē (هرمی)	pear	Fol. 108v, no. 91
19	kar (کار)	donkey	Fol. 94v, no. 31
20	khannāh (خناه)	Lawsonia inermis (henna)	Fol. 90v, no. 6

No.	Kurdish word	English translation	Folio
21	khwārāh (حواراه)	plantago	Fol. 126r–26v, no. 162
22	khwē (خويه)	salt	Fol. 141v, no. 231
23	kirwa & kōtir (كروه، كوتر)	dove, pigeon	Fol. 93r, no. 29
24	māsha (ماسه)	brain, bone marrow	Fol. 143r, no. 233
25	mūyar or muwēr (موير)	myrtle	Fol. 6v, no. 5
26	nahk (نهك)	chickpea	Fol. 81r, no. 336
27	panīr (بنير)	cheese	Fol. 48r, no. 212
28	pung (بنك)	mint	Fol. 147a, no. 247
29	qīling (قيلنك)	crane	Fol. 120r, no. 143
30	sa (سه)	dog	Fol. 120v, no. 142
31	shitī (شتى)	watermelon	Fol. 54v, no. 237
32	siva (سفه)	bran	Fol. 81v, no. 334
33	tāshān (طاشان)	Juncus acutus	Fol. 55v, no. 240
34	zirk (زرك)	cumin	Fol. 111v, no. 153

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